

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AGR-05

SAB-01 IO-10 /106 W

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R 111619Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 787

INFO AMEBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:OVIP TS

SUBJECT: GISCARD D'ESTAING'S VISIT TO TUNISIA

1. SUMMARY: GISCARD D'ESTAING'S NOVEMBER 6 - 8
OFFICIAL VISIT TO TUNISIAN APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A
GREAT SUCCESS FROM GOT STANDPOINT AND ESPECIALLY
IN BOURGUIBA'S OWN EYES. IN TOASTS AND SPEECHES
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FRENCH PRESIDENT WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO FLATTER

BOURGUIBA. GISCARD D'ESTAING ALSO DWELT AT LENGTH ON SENTIMENTAL BONDS LINKING THE TWO COUNTRIES AND HANDED OUT PROMISES OF EVEN CLOSER FUTURE COOPERATION, ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FIELDS BUT ALSO IN POLITICAL AREAS OF PEACE-KEEPING IN MEDITERRANEAN AND EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. VISIT MAY HAVE RANKED FOR BOURGUIBA AS ONE OF TRULY GREAT EVENTS OF HIS LIFE: THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE AGAINST WHICH THE SUPREME COMBATTANT WON HIS INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE PAID HOMAGE TO BOURGUIBA AND DEMONSTRATED THE SUCCESS OF BOURGUIBA'S STANDING POLICY OF FOSTERING CLOSE TIES WITH A NATION FOR WHICH BOUGUIBA PERSONALLY HAS DEEP SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. FEENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING LEFT TUNIS EVENING SATURDAY OCTOBER 8 AT CONCLUSION THREE DAY OFFICIAL VISIT LONG AWAITED BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA. NOT ONLY WAS THIS FIRST VISIT BY FRENCH HEAD OF STATE SINCE TUNISIA'S INDEPENDENCE BUT EARLIER VISITS BY GISCARD D'ESTAING TO RABAT AND ALGIERS HAD APPARENTLY LEFT BOURGUIBA FEELING SOMEWHAT LIKE THE ODD MAN OUT. GISCARD WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS -- SOPHISTICATED OFFICIALS TELL US HE WENT TOO FAR FOR CREDIBILITY -- TO FLATTER BOURGUIBA AND TO DWELL ON THE IDENTITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THE DEPTH OF THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL TIES LINKING THEIR TWO PEOPLES. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT FRANCE VIEWS ITS RELATONS WITH TUNISIA AS "PRIVILEGED" AND THAT FRANCE INTENDS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN AND DEEPEN ITS TIES WITH TUNISIA.

3. BILATERAL RELATONS: GISCARD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE NUMBER OF COOPERANTS WORKING IN TUNISIAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IS BEING REDUCED BUT CITED THIS FACT AS PROOF OF EFFECTIVENESS OF FRANCO-TUNISIAN CULTURAL COOPERATION. HE COUPLED THIS WITH WORDS OF PRAISE FOR THE TUNISIAN WORKERS IN FRANCE AND ASSURED GOT THAT THEIR INTERESTS WOULD BE LOOKED OUT FOR. GISCARD EMPHASIZED THAT TUNISIA STANDS FIRST ON THE LIST OF FRENCH AID RECIPIENT COUNTRIES IN TERMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF VALUE PER CAPITA AND CLAIMED THAT TUNISIA BENEFITS FROM ONE-TENTH OF ALL FRENCH LOANS. HE LEFT THE IMPRESSION THROUGH GENERAL STATEMENTS THAT DIRECT FRENCH AID WOULD NOW BE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY FURTHER. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO ASSISTANCE IN THE AREAS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF TUNISIAN TV CAPABILITY AS AREAS IN WHICH GOT WOKULD PROVIDE AID BEYOND THAT ALREADY AGREED. RE

TV, JOINT COMMUNIQUE CONTAINS EXPLICIT GOT STATEMENT
THAT "IN PRINCIPLE" TUNISIA WILL MAKE USE OF SECAM
COLOR TV SYSTEM. ELSEWHERE HE EXPRESSED THE INTENT
TO INCREASE FRENCH INVESTMENT IN TUNISIAN INDUSTRY
AND TO ASSIST WITH DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN TUNISIA.

4. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:

A. THE MDITERRANEAN: -- LAKE OF PEACE: GISCARD'S
EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY OF INTEREST BETWEEN FRANCE
AND TUNISIA HAS GIVEN RISE TO PRESS AND DIPLOMATIC
CORPS SPECULATION THAT GISCARD MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND
POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING U.S. AND SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

COMMENT: REVIEWING GISCARD'S PUBLIC WORDS ON
THIS SUBJECT AND BOURGUIBA'S REMARKS IN INTERVIEW
WITH FRANCE-INTER (FBIS LONDON LD081446Y), EMBASSY
CONCLUDES GISCARD'S PRINCIPAL OBJECT IN DISCUSSING
"LAKE OF PEACE" WAS TO EMPHASIZE COMMON FRANCO-TUNISIAN
INVOLVEMENT IN MEDITERRANEAN EVENTS RATHER THAN TO
PROPOSE EXCLUSION OF GREAT POWER PRESENCE IN AREA.
END COMMENT.

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B. MIDDLE EAST: JOINT COMMUNIQUE EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT MUST FIND AN OVERALL JUST AND DURABLE SETTLEMENT. TO BE EQUITABLE IT MUST BE BASED ON ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED SINCE 1967 REPEATE 1967, THE RIGHT OF ALL STATES OF THE REGION TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN RECOGNIZED AND GUARANTEED BORDERS AND THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO HAVE AN INDEPENDENT HOME LAND. COMMUNIQUE ADDS THAT SUCH A SETTLEMENT SHOULD HAVE APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL GUARANGEES.

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C. PALESTINE: APPARENTLY A PLO DELEGATION CAME FROM PARIS FOR TALKS UNDER TUNISIAN AUSPICES WITH THE FRENCH DELEGATION HERE. THERE IS NO REPORT THAT SUCH TALKS IN FACT TOOK PLACE THOUGH ARABIC PRESS REPORTS BOURGUIBA INTRODUCED PLO REPS TO GISCARD. TUNISIAN SIDE MADE STRONG POINT THAT GOT LOOKS TO FRANCE TO TAKE THE LEAD WITH WESTERN EUROPE IN THROWING WEIGHT BEHIND EFFORTS TO SETTLE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. ANNOUNCEMENT IN FRANCE JUST PRIOR TO GISCARD'S ARRIVAL IN TUNIS THAT GOVERNMENT OF RANCE WILL PERMIT PLO TO MAINTAIN AND OFFICIAL "INFORMATION AND LIAISON OFFICE" IN PARIS WAS CITED AS EVIDENCE OF FRANCE'S SINCERITY IN THIS DIRECTION.

D. SPANISH SAHARA: IN A SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT AT A NEWS CONFERENCE IT CAME OUT THAT GISCARD AND BOURGUIBA HAD SENT A JOINT MESSAGE, CONTENTS STILL UNKNOWN, TO KING HASSAN, THE MARURETANIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT URGING A PEACEFUL COMPROMISE SOLUTION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MESSAGE WAS PREPARED AT REQUEST OF KING HASSAN AND DESPITE FACT THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS CHATTI AND SAUVAGNARGUES HAD RECOMMENDED AGAINST ITS PREPARATION.

COMMENT: MADRID TEL 7851 INDICATING THAT MESSAGE CALLS FOR TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE WISHES OF THE SAHARAN PEOPLE, IF ACCURATE, SUGGESTS DEPARTURE FROM BOURGUIBA'S BASIC POSITON

THAT SAHARA SHOULD BE DIVIDED BETWEEN MAURETANIA AND MOROCCO. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT RECENT ALGERIAN ATTACHS AGAINST BOURGUIBA OVER HIS PRO-MOROCCO STANCE RE SAHARA HAS INDUCED HIM TO MODIFY HIS POSITION SOMEWHAT IN EFFORT TO APPEASE HIS STRONG NEIGHBOR TO THE WEST. END COMMENT.

E. LEBANON: BOURGUIBA AND GISCARD EXPRESSED THE HOPE FOR AN EARLY RETURN TO PEACE IN LEBANON AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. IN MEDIA INTERVIEWS FACT EMERGED THAT GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE HAS OFFERED TO SEND SENIOR FRENCH DIPLOMAT TO LEBANON IF HIS SERVICES WERE DESIRED, APPARENTLY IN MEDIATORY ROLE, AND BOURGUIBA EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THIS FRENCH INITIATIVE.

F. EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE: THE TWO SIDES TOOK SATISFACTION IN RENCET PROGRESS NOTED IN SEARCH OF EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORESAW CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE ARAB WORLD IN POLITICAL, SCIENTIFIC, ECONOMIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL SPHERES. GISCARD DESCRIBED TUNISIA AS AN APT PARTNER FOR FRANCE IN PROMOTING THIS DIALOGUE. HE SPOKE OF THE TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BEING SUCH THAT FRANCO-TUNISIAN RELATIONS MIGHT SERVE AS AN UNPRECEDENTED MODEL FOR COUNTRIES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CURRENT EFFORT TO BRING DEVELOPED AND UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES TOGETHER IN A NEW WORLD ECONOMIC EQUILIBRIUM.

5. COMMENT: GISCARD VISIT CLEARLY LEFT TUNISIANS WITH IMPRESSION THAT FRANCE HAD UNDERTAKEN SIGNIFICANT NEW INCREASES IN ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AID. ONE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL WITH WHOM WE SPOKE NOTED THERE IS LITTLE CONCRETE IN WHAT GISCARD UNDERTOOK AND COMMENTED THAT WHILE THE PROSPECT OF INCREASED FRENCH INPUT IS CERTAINLY PROMISING, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN TO WHAT EXTENT FRENCH PROMISES WILL BE MADE CONCRETE AND IMPLEMENTED. AS AN EXERCISE IN PLEASING BOURGUIBA, VISIT WAS MASTERFUL AND GISCARD'S WORDS WELL CHOSEN AND BEAUTIFULLY DELIVERED. IT ALMOST SEEMS FROM THE PUBLISHED TEXTS AS IF GISCARD AND BOURGUIBA SEE THEIR COUNTRIES LINKED IN A WORLD OF THEIR OWN TO WHICH OTHER NATIONS ARE ONLY OCCASIONALLY RELEVANT. COMING CLOSE ON THE HEELS OF THE U.S.-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION MEETING WITH ITS WARM AND SATISFYING OUTCOME, THE GISCARD VISIT PROVIDES COUNTER-POINT BY UNDERSCORING FACT THAT FRANCE HAS IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN TUNISIA, AND VICE VERSA, ON A SCALE WELL BEYOND THE SCOPE OF OUR OWN RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA.
SEELYE

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